natives were driven into the bush. A parliament, an army and an administrative apparatus were created in childish aping of the American pattern, and a new type of the "free Negro citizen" was born. American imperialism, now building an open door into Africa is backing the creation of Liberia and strengthening it by loans, by the rubber and cocoa monopoly, and by the control of the customs and police. This adds to the numerous shortcomings of the "trouser Negro" the arbitrary use of political power attained without struggle; the natives are being brutally exploited their ignorance of formalities and their illiteracy are utilised to collect taxes three or four times etc. No revolutionary impetus may be expected from the Liberian rulers, as their interests are directed against the tribes of the interior; their liberal parties, at the best, are standing on the platform of the Garvey movement an organization of petty bourgeois and intellectual Negroes in America who dream of creating a black empire of capitalism in Africa. The republic is a tool of imperialism.

The revolutionary forces that will acquire some political signifiance in the development of Africa on the road to emancipation are as different as the economic changes that gave birth to them.

1. The industrial development of South Africa permits the direct transgression of primitive forms of society to a Negro proletariat. Thus the proletariat gradually arises threatening the existence of the capitalist white South Africa. The government has already given some signs of fear: reprisals of the movement and the attempt to increase the gap between the black and the white workers.

2. The European unable to stand the climate of Western Africa, trains a class of Negroes to the task of control and administration in the service of imperialism, sometimes they are granted certain privileges for the exploitation of others. The privileges of these body guards are resisted by the unbroken powers of the bush Negroes. The intellectuals among the Negroes are organizing the defence of imperialism.

The Negro race is the chief agent of the revolutionary powers in Africa, and will acquire a clearly defined revolutionary significance among the black proletariat of the West Indies and North America. They will realise their tremendous reserves, as stated by Lamine Senghor (Chairman of the Negro Self Defence Committee) at the Brussels Congress against colonial oppression and imperialism (February 1927): "The Negroes have slept too long. But beware! Who has slept too long will not go to sleep again when he wakes."

IMPERIALISM IN THE WEST INDIES

By George Padmore

There are about 10 million Negroes in the West Indies, a small group of islands located in the Caribbean Sea, between north and south America. All except Cuba, Haiti and San Domingo are dominated by British, French, Dutch and American imperialism; while Cuba, Haiti and San Domingo, the so-called independent Republics are, in truth and reality, economic colonies of the United States, which maintains puppet governments in each of them as well as marines in Haiti.

1. Labour and Social Conditions

The Negro masses in the West Indies are just as viciously exploited as the natives of Africa or the black toilers in the United States of America. Their
exploiters are not only the foreign imperialists, but the native bourgeoisie and the landlords, who are equally as ruthless in their suppression of the broad toiling masses, as the foreign blood suckers.

After the abolition of slavery in the early eighties of the last century, the Negroes refused to continue to work on the plantations. The British Government, in order to save the sugar industry made grants of land to them on the basis of which a peasantry was developed. At the same time it was necessary to secure labour for the big plantations, so East Indian immigrants were brought in from India in 1845 and set to work on the sugar cane plantations. These workers were so badly treated that the Government of India was forced to protest to the Colonial Office at London.

Since the war the policy has been to stop peasant land holding and to place all the lands in the hands of the big native planters, landlords and foreign corporations. This has created a landless semi-proletariat, who work part time on the land and part in the mills. Everywhere the natives are in revolt against the landlords and their governments.

In Cuba, Porto Rico, Haiti and San Domingo, American imperialists have completely enslaved millions of black workers on the sugar cane, coffee and tobacco plantations. In order to get cheaper labour thousands of natives are imported from Haiti and Jamaica to work on the plantations in Cuba, Porto Rico and San Domingo.

In the British colonies of Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbadoes, British imperialism is equally as brutal and ruthless as American imperialism. Throughout the West Indies the whole population lives on the verge of starvation. In the rural districts we find thousands of pauperized, down-trodden natives huddled together in company-owned barracks on the sugar plantations or scattered around the countryside in mud shacks. The social conditions amongst these victims of imperialism is hardly much removed from primitive life. Forced to labour long hours for the smallest pittance, the West Indian worker is scarcely able to provide himself with food to eat. Women and children are forced to go into the fields and labour in order to help along the family. The man worker receives about 40 cents per day while the women and children receive between 15 and 30 cents.

In the larger British colonies, especially in Trinidad, where there is a big oil and asphalt industry, an industrial proletariat has been brought into being in recent years. Thousands of Negroes are employed to dig the pitch (asphalt) and to load ships at La Brea, at an average of 50 cents per day and live under terrible conditions.

Although the vast majority of workers in the oil fields are Negroes, in recent years, however, Hindu workers have been attracted to the industry. The natives are the unskilled labour force, while the Europeans occupy the best paid positions.

The marine workers form another important section of the West Indian working class, sailors, longshoremen, boatmen, etc. The transportation system, such as railroads, street cars, busses and taxis are all operated by black workers.

2. Agricultural Situation.

The complete failure of the sugar industry has reduced the West Indian toilers to a condition beyond description. Starvation and disease are raising havoc and depopulating entire sections of the population, especially in the rural districts.

The Church is making some flimsy appeals for the labourers, but it is merely doing this to safeguard its own position, for much of its financial backing came out of the sweat and blood of the agricultural labourers, who have been taught
by the Church to work hard, and be obedient to their exploiters, have faith in the
Christian God and food will always be guaranteed them. But now things have
come to the worst and this is arousing the Negro slaves. That is why their
religious dope peddlers are doing their best to divert this growing revolutionary
spirit among the masses into safe channels, by holding out promises of Govern-
ment relief to them.

These Church people are forced to admit that there is squalor and degradation
among the great majority of the labouring classes, their food is insufficient in
quantity and quality. Considering the nature of the work they have to do, a great
proportion of these people of all ages and both sexes are suffering from
malnutrition; in the country districts, for the most part there are no sanitary
conveniences, this applies universally to all villages. Diseases prevail which are
preventable and curable and are sapping the energy and life of the population.

The same conditions which exist in the British colonies also prevail in the
French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, where agriculture is the
main occupation of the populations. All of the large sugar cane plantations are
owned by French companies which make great profits by robbing the Negro
workers.

The conditions which prevail in the Virgin Islands of the United States are
most appalling. The Negro workers hardly get more than two days work per week
for which they receive an average wage of 35 to 50 cents. Poverty exists every­
where and is taking its toll among the children of the poor.

3. Forced Labour.

Forced labour also exists in the West Indies. Whenever there is a shortage
of labour for public works, the Governments of the various colonies especially
in Haiti, conscript or force the natives to do the work. Nearly all of the public
roads have been constructed by forced labour gangs under the military supervision
of United States Marines. In the British Islands all forms of repressive legislation,
such as vagrancy laws, are enacted in order to enable the imperialist rulers to
find an excuse to force the Negroes to work. Workers and peasants are arrested
on all kinds of frame-up charges, thrown into prison and there assigned to chain
gangs and made to build roads and other forms of public works.

According to the latest reports, the situation has become so deplorable in the
British colonies that the "Labour" Government, in order to avoid the general
uprising of the toiling population, has been forced to appropriate a small sum of
money to help the populations in Trinidad, Jamaica and British Guinea.

4. What must be done?

The workers and peasants in the West Indies must build up a real revolu­
tionary trade union movement. For example in Trinidad where the labour move­
ment has reached the most advanced stage, the left wing opposition to the
reformists misleaders, (Cipriani and Bishop who presently control the Working
Men's Association) should immediatly begin a wide campaign among the
rank and file in the various unions, as well as the unorganized on the basis of
concrete everyday demands which should be linked up with the ultimate demands
of the class interests, to win the masses away from the reformists and develop
the left wing movement.

Rank and file committees should be set up inside and outside the unions.
These committees must take the initiative in putting forward the demands of the
workers over the heads of the "leaders", for only in this way will the opposition be able to expose the treacherous role which the fakers are carrying on, especially since the crisis which is forcing them to come out with more and more "left" phrases in order to cover up their deception.

The opposition must pay special attention to the organization of the agricultural labourers and the unorganized workers in the basic industries (oil and asphalt), as well as transportation.

Committees of action must also be set up among the agricultural workers of all the sugar and cocoa plantations, as has been successfully done on the Felicity Estate, (where, it may be noted, 2000 labourers armed with cutlasses, agricultural forks, hoes and other implements marched on Port-of-Spain, the capital of the Island, July last, and demanded that the plantation owners and the Government withdraw the wage cut — from 1 shilling to 9 pence — and abolish the increased hours of labour).

Despite all the attempts of the labour fakers and the petty bourgeois nationalist leaders, such as the Hon. Serran Teelucksingh, "labour" representative of the Legislative Council of Trinidad to persuade the workers to turn over the leadership of the struggle into their hands and return to the estate, the strike committee bluntly refused to permit the men to go back to work until all of their demands had been granted.

Since this armed demonstration, the Trinidad Press reports that there is considerable unrest on all the large plantations, where the workers, inspired by the militancy of the labourers of the Felicity Estate are also setting up committees of action to put forward their grievances and lead them in the struggle.

The International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers should render all aid and assistance possible to the struggling West Indian workers, and to support the economic and political demands of the toiling population of the West Indies in their fight against the imperialists and the native capitalist exploiters.

APPEAL TO THE BLACK SOLDIERS OF FRANCE

Black soldiers of the imperialist rulers of France, we send you a warning and an appeal. A new war is very near. It is being prepared by the rulers of France who have conscripted you into their armies, the armies with which they have conquered and oppressed the peoples of East, North Africa and Black Africa. They will demand that you fight for the "mother" country as they demanded before.

They will tell you that you must fight for Liberty, for Equality, for Fraternity. But there is no liberty, no equality, no fraternity. In the last great war you were placed in the first line trenches, to lead the charge against the enemies' fortification. They said this was an "honour" bestowed upon you for your bravery and daring. You paid for this honour upon their altar of imperialism with tens of thousands of lives. They promised you great rewards. They have squeezed billions of profits out of the exploitation and oppression of millions of colonial peoples, out of your brothers and sisters of Black Africa. And what has been your reward?